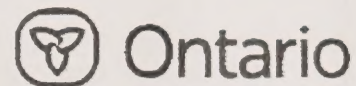


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What You Need to Know About Renting an Apartment in Ontario

Your rights

Renting an apartment in Ontario for the first time is a big step. It is important that you understand your rights and responsibilities, and those of landlords, during the process. This fact sheet will help you better understand your rights so that you can get your apartment without problems.

Tenant Protection Act

The *Tenant Protection Act* sets out all the rules that govern your relationship with landlords, including those dealing with rent. Disputes over issues in the landlord and tenant relationship are resolved by the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal, which has full authority to make decisions under the Act.

Ontario Human Rights Code

The Ontario Human Rights Code states that every person has a right to equal treatment, without discrimination, when looking for a place to live. It allows landlords to collect specific information from you to judge your ability to be a good tenant. Landlords must use this information in a way that does not go against your rights under the Code. The Ontario Human Rights Commission enforces the Code for the province and handles complaints.

Renting a Unit

A landlord can ask you for your rental history, credit references, income information, and approval for a credit check. During the negotiations, you and the landlord should agree on the rent amount and the services included in the rent such as parking, heat and hot water.

A landlord can only collect one month's worth of rent as a deposit, which he/she can apply to the last month of your stay.

What kinds of questions can a landlord ask?

The law states what a landlord can and cannot ask you during an interview. A landlord:

- Can ask you to complete an application form for general information;
- Can request credit references and rental history information;
- Can ask you for income information as long as it is for rental credit and rental information;
- Can request the name of a co-signer for a lease or application form;
- **Cannot** single out a particular group of people and ask only that group and not others for a co-signer; and
- **Should not** ask if you are new to Ontario or Canada. If the question comes up, you do not have to give an answer.

Illegal Rent Requests

Some landlords may ask for and/or take more than one month's rent in advance as a deposit. **This is illegal.** If a landlord does this, file a complaint immediately with either the Investigation and Enforcement Unit of the Ministry of

Municipal Affairs and Housing or the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal.

It is also illegal for a landlord to require you to pay a special charge or buy anything – for example, carpets or curtains already in the premises – as a condition of renting a unit. If this happens, you should also file an application to the Tribunal, which would then look into the matter.

What can you do if a landlord charges you illegal rent?

You should report any landlord that requests illegal rent to the Investigation and Enforcement Unit by calling them toll-free at 1-888-772-9277 or (416) 585-7214. The Investigation and Enforcement Unit will either contact the landlord to solve the problem or look into the complaint and lay charges. You don't have to pay a fee to report an offence to the Investigation and Enforcement Unit.

If a landlord has taken illegal rent from you, please file an application with the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal. The Tribunal can order a landlord to pay back any excess rent money to you.

To file an application, get the form from the nearest Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal office. Call the Tribunal at 1-888-332-3234* to find the office closest to you. Send the form in person or by mail, courier or fax, along with the proper fee to

* Toronto (416) 645-8080

the nearest Tribunal office. Application fees start at \$45 and are payable by cash, money order, certified cheque, debit card, Visa or Mastercard. The Tribunal will schedule a hearing when it receives the application and full payment, and issue you a hearing notice by mail.

Penalties

A landlord may only collect one month's rent in advance. The penalties for landlords who ask and/or receive illegal rent charges from a tenant are severe. An individual landlord can expect a fine of up to \$10,000. A landlord that is a corporation may receive a fine as high as \$50,000.

Discrimination

It is against the law for a landlord to discriminate against you on any of the following grounds: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed (religion), sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, or disability. If you believe that a landlord is denying you access to rental housing based on any of these characteristics, please contact the Ontario Human Rights Commission at 1-800-387-9080.

Need more information?

The *Tenant Protection Act* is available for viewing on the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal's Web site at www.orht.gov.on.ca. You can buy copies of the Act by calling Publications Ontario toll-free at 1-800-668-9938 or visiting the Publications Ontario section of the Ontario government Web site, at www.gov.on.ca. You may also contact the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal in any of the following ways:

- Call their Ontario-wide 24-hour information phone line toll-free at 1-888-332-3234*. Telephone customer assistance is available during regular business hours, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tenants can call this number to receive help with rental issues, including questions on tenants' rights when having to provide rent to a landlord beyond the first and last month's rent. The Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal subscribes to Language Line Services. Language Line Services provides translation services for those whose first language is neither English nor French. Interpreters are available who speak over 140 languages;
- Visit one of the 17 full-service offices across the province in person from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday;

* Toronto (416) 645-8080

- Fax your regional Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal office. See the list of Tribunal offices for fax numbers; and
- Visit the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal's Web site at www.orht.gov.on.ca.

You may contact the Ontario Human Rights Commission by calling it toll-free at 1-800-387-9080.

Office Locations

Toronto

Toronto East/Durham
Regional Office
2275 Midland Ave., Unit 2
Toronto M1P 3E7
Fax number 416-314-8649

Toronto North Regional
Office
47 Sheppard Avenue East
Suite 700
Toronto M2N 5X5
Fax number 416-314-9567

Toronto South Regional
Office
79 St. Clair Avenue East
Suite 212
Toronto M4T 1M6
Fax number 416-326-9838

Barrie

Barrie Client Service Office
34 Simcoe Street
Barrie L4N 6T4
Fax number 705-739-6630

Durham

Durham Client Service
Office
1916 Dundas Street East
Whitby L1N 9J4
Fax number 905-723-3773

Hamilton

Southern Regional Office
119 King Street West
14th Floor
Hamilton L8P 4Y7
Fax number 905-521-7870

Kingston

Kingston Client Service
Office
The Ontario Government
Centre, Beechgrove Complex
51 Heakes Lane
Kingston K7M 9B1
Fax number 613-536-7220

Kitchener

Kitchener Client Service
Office
30 Duke Street West
Suite 401
Kitchener N2H 3W5
Fax number 519-571-5057

London

Southwest Regional Office
150 Dufferin Avenue,
Suite 400
London N6A 5N6
Fax number 519-679-7290

Mississauga

Central Ontario Regional
Office
4 Robert Speck Parkway
Suite 550
Mississauga L4Z 1S1
Fax number 905-279-7286

Ottawa

Eastern Regional Office
255 Albert Street, 4th Floor
Ottawa K1P 6A9
Fax number 613-787-4024

Owen Sound

Owen Sound Client Service
Office
1050 Second Avenue East
Owen Sound N4K 2H7
Fax number 519-371-6336

Peterborough

Peterborough Client Service
Office
300 Water Street, Suite S209
Peterborough K9J 3C7
Fax number 705-755-3011

St. Catharines

St. Catharines Client Service
Office
301 St. Paul Street
St. Catharines L2R 7R4
Fax number 905-521-7870

Sudbury

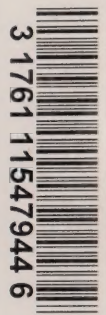
Northern Regional Office
199 Larch Street, Suite 1003
Sudbury P3E 5P9
Fax number 705-564-4118

Thunder Bay

Thunder Bay Client Service
Office
435 James St. S., Suite 223
Thunder Bay P7E 6S7
Fax number 807-473-3077

Windsor

Windsor Client Service
Office
880 Ouellette Ave., Suite 602
Windsor N9A 1C7
Fax number 519-973-1421



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